

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for real-time communication among two or more individuals separated in space, comprising the steps of:
  - determining that a first individual is likely to be interested in communicating with a second individual via a first communications link;
  - retrieving information via the first communications link about one or more additional individuals from electronic memory means associated with the second individual; and
  - establishing communication with at least one of the additional individuals based on the retrieved information.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining that a first individual is likely to be interested in communicating with a second individual via a first communications link comprises the step of:
  - establishing communication between the first individual and the second individual.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the communication established between the first and second individuals is carried out by telephony.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the communication established between the first and second individuals is by real-time telephony.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the communication established between the first and second individuals comprises exchanges of voice mail messages.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the communication established between the first and second individuals comprises exchanges of text messages.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein the first and second individuals communicate via real-time video.

5 8. The method of claim 2, wherein the first and second individuals communicate via interactive real-time text communication.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining that a first individual is likely to be interested in communicating with a second individual comprises the steps of:

10 displaying a representation associated with the second individual to the first individual; and

selecting the representation by the first individual.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the information retrieved from electronic memory means associated with the second individual is organized in a personal directory  
15 included in the electronic means.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the information about one or more individuals in the personal directory is entered manually by the second individual.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the information in the memory is obtained by observing previous communications between the second individual and one of the  
20 individuals in the memory.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the information is organized in a personal directory included in the electronic memory.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the communication established between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory is carried out by telephony.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the communication established between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory is by real-time telephony.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the communication established between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory comprises exchanges of voice messages.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the communication established between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory comprises exchanges of text messages.

18. The method of claim 12, wherein the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory is by real-time video.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein the communication established between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory communicate via interactive real-time text.

20. The method of claim 12 wherein from observing previous communications between the second individual and one of the individuals in the memory, the frequency with which the second individual communicates with the individuals in the memory is

determined, and the individuals are sorted in the memory according to the frequency of communication.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the individuals in the memory that do not communicate frequently with the second individual are deleted from the memory after a certain amount of time.

22. The method of claim 10, wherein the second individual sets permissions associated to the access of the personal directory by others.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the permissions set allow the personal directory associated with the second individual to be accessed by the public.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the permissions set allow the personal directory associated with the second individual to be accessed by specific persons or group of persons designated by the second individual.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the permissions set make public a plurality of individual records, each record containing information corresponding to each of the at least one individuals.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the permissions set make available, to specific persons or group of persons, a plurality of individual records, each record containing information corresponding to each of the at least one individuals.

27. The method of claim 22, wherein the permissions set for a given directory vary according to a mode of use in a collaborative conferencing session.

28. The method of claim 13, wherein the second individual sets permissions associated to the access of the personal directory by others.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the permissions set allow the personal directory associated with the second individual to be accessed by the public.

5 30. The method of claim 28, wherein the permissions set allow the personal directory associated with the second individual to be accessed by specific persons or group of persons designated by the second individual.

10 31. The method of claim 28, wherein the permissions set make public a plurality of individual records, each record containing information corresponding to each of the at least one individuals.

32. The method of claim 28, wherein the permissions set make available, to specific persons or group of persons, a plurality of individual records, each record containing information corresponding to each of the at least one individuals.

15 33. The method of claim 28, wherein the permissions set for a given directory vary according to a mode of use in a collaborative conferencing session.

34. A collaborative conferencing system comprising:

a large virtual space room;

a display for displaying in real-time a representation of only those persons in the virtual space room who have been defined as likely to be interesting; and

20 means for establishing communications with the persons in the virtual space room.

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35. The system of claim 34, wherein the representation of persons includes information about the persons.

36. The system of claim 34, wherein the collaborative conferencing system is set to a mode of random casual conferencing, the random mode enabling the communication between two persons that seek an interesting but otherwise random conversation.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the communication comprises two-way audio conferencing.

38. The method of claim 36, wherein the communication comprises two-way interactive text communication.

39. The method of claim 36, wherein the communication comprises email exchange between the two persons.

40. The method of claim 36, wherein the communication comprises voice mail message exchanges between the persons.

41. A collaborative conferencing system comprising:  
a large virtual space room comprised of persons from the general public or from private groups or organizations;

a display for displaying in real-time a representation of persons from the virtual space room; and

means for establishing communications with the persons in the virtual space room.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein the communications can be established via text conferencing or via audio conferencing.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein the group of persons that form the virtual room are partitioned into subgroups.

5 44. The system of claim 43, wherein persons in a subgroup only communicate with persons within that subgroup.

45. The system of claim 44, wherein a person in a subgroup can transfer to another subgroup after looking at the existence of other subgroups in the display and determining another subgroup of interest.